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Drugged by Russians, 3 U.S. Attaches Say

Quiet Protest Made to Soviet Ministry; Other Acts Against Americans Noted

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Three staff members of the American Embassy in Moscow claim they were drugged in late March while on a visit to the port city of Odessa.

According to reliable sources, the three officers, all assistant military attaches, became sick and passed out after apparently being given "knockout drops" during a two-day trip to Odessa on March 24-26. Odessa is the principal Soviet Black Sea port where most American wheat was shipped last winter.

The Embassy, after examining the attaches' report, protested to the Soviet Foreign Ministry.

No Public Charges

Possibly lacking substantial proof, the United States decided not to make public the charges. No one seems to know why the drugging took place.

When asked about the report, Robert J. McCloskey, State Department Press Officer, said today that "I would confirm that two assistant naval attaches and one assistant air attache from the United States Embassy in Moscow may have been drugged with mild effect while on a trip to Odessa, March 24 to 26."

"The Embassy has protested to the Soviet Ministry of For-

eign Affairs," Mr. McCloskey said.

Mr. McCloskey said the protest was made last week. He had no immediate comment on why there had been a month's delay between the incidents and the protest.

Officers Identified

Officials later identified the officers involved as Marine Lt. Col. J. M. Landrigan and Navy Lt. Comdr. S. Shapiro, the Naval attaches; and Lt. Col. W. L. Van Meter, the air attache.

The officers apparently were drugged during dinner on March 25, officials said.

They first noticed "mild symptoms" when they awoke the next morning. Subsequent medical tests showed "presence of enough barbiturates to cause extreme drowsiness," officials said.

The drugging follows two other incidents in recent months

also involving American military personnel in Russia.

On February 14, two naval attaches were driving in a car in Leningrad when a crowd of Soviet citizens stopped them, crawled over the car and beat on the hood. The Americans subsequently were accused of taking illegal photographs—a charge denied by the embassy which said they took no photos.

On March 17, two air attaches were surrounded by angry citizens in a public park in the city of Tula, and accused of being on military property. The park is near an airfield, but the embassy said the officers were only relaxing.

The Soviet government further barred the four officers involved from traveling outside Moscow for 90 days.

Word of those incidents became public only when Western reporters learned of them in early April and broke the story.

Must Tell Travel Plans

All foreign diplomats must tell Soviet officials of travel plans before they can leave Moscow. The tactics seem an indirect way of telling the Americans that they are being closely watched, observers here say.

Soviet diplomats in the United States also must file travel plans with the State Department and the Pentagon when planning to travel outside a 25-mile radius of Washington.

In recent testimony before the subcommittee of the House Appropriations Committee, FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover said that in 1962, Soviet military attaches made 23 automobile "reconnaissance trips" around the United States.

In 1963, Mr. Hoover said, they made 36 such trips.

Both countries have put about 26 per cent of their national territory off limits to each other's officials. The United States, however, unlike the Soviet Union, allows Soviet tourists free range in this country. Less than 100 Soviet tourists visited the United States in 1963.

This is believed the first time American diplomats in Russia have claimed they were drugged. It is not the first drugging, however.

There have been many incidents in the past, and many complaints to Soviet authorities about such incidents—or "provocations" in diplomatic jargon.

Mr. Hoover disclosed in his testimony, for instance, that "on two separate instances an American college professor and a woman tourist went to Moscow where they were drugged while separately visiting the Soviet Union, photographed while unconscious, participating in acts of sexual perversion, arrested and their co-operation in obtaining intelligence information solicited under threat of prosecution and exposure."